

Gang Data Sharing

USING NIEM TO UNIFY STATEWIDE GANG DATA SHARING

SYNOPSIS

This case study highlights the successful utilization of NIEM as part of the MassGangs project to support the exchange of information obtained by local, regional, and state criminal justice agencies regarding members of criminal gangs and illegal organizations in Massachusetts.

AGENCY OVERVIEW

The Massachusetts Executive Office of Public Safety and Security (EOPSS) served as the main sponsor of the MassGangs project and was responsible for the overall direction and leadership of the project. Located in Boston, Massachusetts, the EOPSS and its 14 member agencies are responsible for managing important public safety, homeland security, emergency management, and criminal justice issues in Massachusetts.

As part of the EOPSS, the Criminal History Systems Board (CHSB) is the Massachusetts agency responsible for providing accurate and reliable criminal justice information and services to law enforcement and criminal justice agencies within the Commonwealth. Throughout the project lifecycle, the CHSB was responsible for project management, hosting, support, and integration of the MassGangs system.

Additional organizations involved in the development and implementation of the MassGangs project include the Commonwealth Fusion Center, the Department of Correction, and local and state law enforcement agencies and gang units. These agencies and organizations served as original data sources and end users of the MassGangs system.

The following diagram (page 2) summarizes the major stakeholders involved in the MassGangs project.

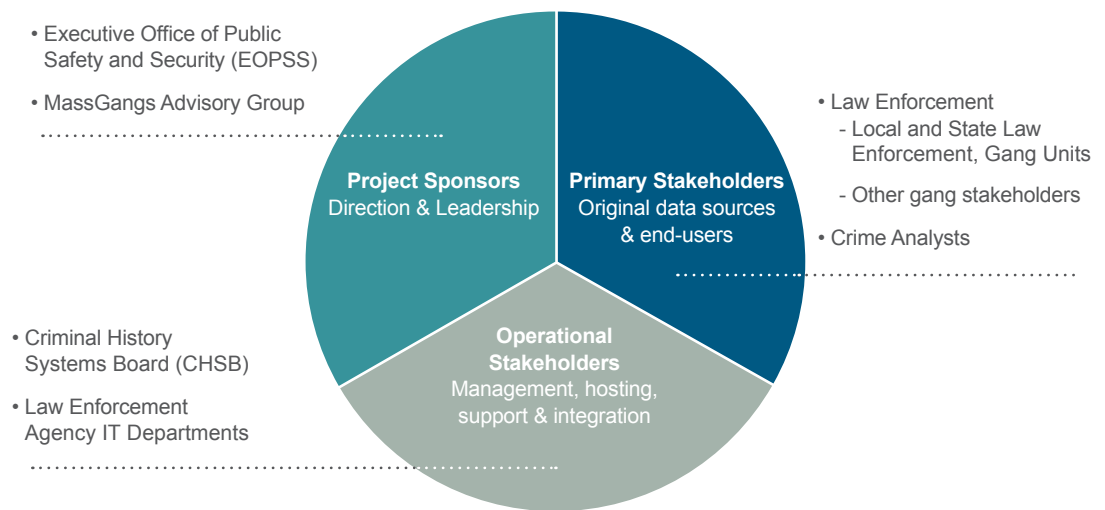
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CHALLENGE: Local, regional, and state law enforcement and public safety agencies in Massachusetts lacked an effective mechanism to capture and share gang-related data statewide. Gang data was stored and maintained locally in agency-specific electronic and paper-based systems that did not support effective information sharing across jurisdictions.

SOLUTION: Using funding provided by a Bureau of Justice Assistance, Department of Justice grant, the Commonwealth, under the leadership of the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security, implemented a centralized repository and Web-based gang data management application called MassGangs. MassGangs is an intelligence and investigative tool that allows authorized users to electronically exchange, store, and facilitate the analysis of gang-related data maintained by public safety and law enforcement agencies throughout Massachusetts. Information can be entered directly into MassGangs via a Web application, or it can be exchanged electronically with agency systems using a NIEM-conformant schema and Information Exchange Package Documentation (IEPD).

RESULTS: MassGangs promotes the real-time sharing of gang and gang member information across various local, regional, and state public safety partners. The project promotes enhanced public safety and security in Massachusetts by enabling statewide access and cross-agency gang data sharing for more than 370 law enforcement and criminal justice agencies. By using NIEM in the MassGangs project, the Commonwealth has streamlined the gang data management process, providing a single, unified way for agencies to share gang intelligence information within Massachusetts. MassGangs also aids current and planned interstate and federal information sharing initiatives. It is designed to be the basis of exchanging gang information with the state of New Jersey and will serve as the foundation for future Massachusetts submissions to the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) Gang File Agency.

MassGangs Stakeholders



CHALLENGE

Local, regional, and state law enforcement and public safety agencies in Massachusetts lacked an effective mechanism to capture and share gang-related data statewide. Gang data was stored and maintained locally in agency-specific electronic and paper-based systems that did not support effective information sharing across jurisdictions. If gang data sharing was conducted, it was often done using unreliable methods such as email and fax. Additionally, many agencies in the Commonwealth did not store gang-related data electronically and often collected and maintained gang information using manual or paper-based methods. These gang data management methods did not provide an effective way for law enforcement to track or measure gang intelligence information being recorded and circulated in Massachusetts.

SOLUTION

Using funding provided by a Bureau of Justice Assistance, Department of Justice grant, the Commonwealth, under the leadership of the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security (EOPSS), implemented a centralized repository and Web-based gang data management application called MassGangs. MassGangs is an intelligence and investigative tool that allows authorized users to electronically exchange, store, and facilitate the analysis of gang-related data maintained by public safety and law enforcement agencies throughout Massachusetts.

MassGangs uses two methods of data entry: a manual method through the Web-based application and a second method via the NIEM-conformant data exchange. A NIEM-conformant gang data schema and Information Exchange Package Documentation (IEPD) was developed for the electronic data exchange used by MassGangs. The schema enables authorized agencies participating in the MassGangs data exchange to electronically submit gang data to the gang database and retrieve it in a standardized format. When designing, developing, and implementing the NIEM IEPD, the MassGangs Project Team used scenario planning, requirements analysis, and domain mapping.

The IEPD schema was built and validated by constructing necessary artifacts including subset, extension, constraint, and exchange schemas. Finally, the MassGangs IEPD was assembled and documented based on the NIEM IEPD Specification via the NIEM IEPD Web tool.

RESULTS

MassGangs promotes the real-time sharing of gang and gang member information across various local, regional, and state public safety partners. The project promotes enhanced public safety and security in Massachusetts by enabling statewide access and cross-agency gang data sharing for more than 370 law enforcement and criminal justice agencies. By using NIEM in the MassGangs project, the Commonwealth has streamlined the gang data management process, providing a single, unified way for agencies to share gang intelligence information within Massachusetts. MassGangs also aids current and planned interstate and federal information sharing initiatives. It is designed to be the basis of exchanging gang information with the state of New Jersey and will serve as the foundation for future Massachusetts submissions to the NCIC Gang File.

To date, several agencies in Massachusetts have submitted data to MassGangs via the data exchange, including the Department of Correction, the Massachusetts State Police, and other local law enforcement and criminal justice agencies. The MassGangs application has made previously unavailable gang information available to the Massachusetts public safety community and supports the development of policies, strategies, and solutions required to address statewide gang trends and ongoing problem areas.